

**PRESS RELEASE**

# **Boston Man Sentenced to Two Years in Prison for Benefit Fraud**

Thursday, May 25, 2023

## **For Immediate Release**

U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Massachusetts

BOSTON – A Hyde Park man was sentenced yesterday in federal court in Boston for using a stolen identity to fraudulently obtain government assistance benefits.

Fernando Mateo Valenzuela, 69, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Leo T. Sorokin to two years and one day in prison and three years of supervised release. Valenzuela was also ordered to pay restitution of \$29,051 to the Department of Unemployment Assistance and \$7,230 to the Department of Transitional Assistance. On Feb. 27, 2023, Valenzuela pleaded guilty to three counts of mail fraud, two counts of unlawfully using another person's Social Security number, and two counts of aggravated identity theft.

In 2020, Valenzuela applied for and received a total of \$29,051 in unemployment payments using the name and Social Security number of a United States citizen. In 2019, Valenzuela used the same stolen identity to apply for and receive \$7,230 in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits from the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance.

Valenzuela's prior criminal record includes four drug convictions and a sex conviction involving a 13-year-old victim.

Acting United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy and Michael J. Krol, Acting Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in New England made the announcement today. Valuable assistance was provided by U.S. Department of Labor, Office of the Inspector General, Office of Investigations – Labor Racketeering & Fraud; U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Inspector General, Office of Investigations – Northeast Region; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Inspector General, Office of Investigations; U.S. Postal Inspection Service; and the Massachusetts State Police. Assistant U.S. Attorney David G. Tobin of Levy's Major Crimes Unit prosecuted the case.

The investigation was conducted by Homeland Security Investigation's Document and Benefit Fraud Task Force (DBFTF), a specialized investigative group comprising personnel from various state, local, and federal agencies with expertise in detecting, deterring, and disrupting organizations and individuals involved in various types of document, identity, and benefit fraud schemes.

*Updated May 25, 2023*

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**Topic**

**IDENTITY THEFT**

**Component**

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